

## Teacher Preparation

Levi knew that having students evaluate public documents would give them practice in determining tone, style, and use of language. Tone is the writer's attitude toward a subject; and by examining this, Levi knew his students would become adept at looking through the eyes of the writer to discover the author's perspective. To introduce this study, Levi had students read the texts of two significant speeches: "Gettysburg Address" by Abraham Lincoln and "I Have a Dream" by Martin Luther King, Jr. Levi gathered copies of the two speeches for each student, highlighters, and poster paper. He then carefully thought through the lesson.

## Activity Starter

Levi handed out copies of Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" and directed students to read the speech, using a highlighter to underline words and phrases that gave hints and clues to the tone of the speech. He used the first few lines to model what he wished the students to do. Afterwards, he directed students to work in pairs to highlight other words and phrases that appear in the speech which suggest Lincoln's tone. He then had them discuss the words and phrases they had highlighted. Each pair listed their responses on the left of a two-columned page of poster paper. At the bottom of the column, he asked students to write one sentence that captured the tone of the speech. The class noted that Lincoln used "dedicated," "devotion," and "consecrate" several times. They also pointed out Lincoln's use of repetition in the final sentence.

Next Levi asked students to read King's "I Have a Dream" speech, again highlighting words and phrases reflecting the speech's tone. Students then returned to their partners, discussed the words and phrases that suggested the tone, and recorded those in the right column of the poster paper. At the bottom of the column, students then again wrote one sentence capturing the speech's tone.

Finally, he instructed students to display their posters around the classroom. He then drew a large Venn diagram on the board with the title of each speech heading the two circles. Using the information displayed on posters, Levi guided students to compare and contrast the tones of the two speeches. As they did this verbally, he recorded their responses on the Venn diagram. He led his students in a discussion of how authors, especially speechwriters, choose their words carefully in order to project a certain tone. Levi also discussed with his students the historical significance of each speech, and he made sure that the students understood that King was referring to Lincoln in the first line of the "I Have a Dream" speech.